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Dugin's Occult Fascism and the Hijacking of Left Anti-Imperialism and Muslim Anti-Salafism

by WAHID AZAL

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Weekend Edition
May 27, 2016
Friday - Sunday

ANDREW LEVINE
Hillary's Gun Gambit

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DANIEL RAVENTÓS - JULIE WARK
Basic Income Gathers Steam Across Europe

Eurasian Thunderbolt flag.

In his September 2015 *CounterPunch* piece, "A New Chapter in the Fascist Internationale," Alexander Reid Ross highlighted the state of the Fascist Internationale in recent times, underscoring the role of Russian fascist and Fourth Position theorist Alexander Dugin and his networks in it. What is however not widely appreciated about the current state of activities by these Duginist networks, especially in social media, is their active recruitment efforts among the Left as well as among disparate groups of anti-Salafist Shiʿi and Sunni Muslims, particularly among supporters of the Resistance Axis. Rather than a legitimate alliance, this turn of events is arguably an attempt to muddy waters by certain behind the scenes power brokers that could potentially fracture (or otherwise neutralize) a united front against Empire from the grassroots and eventually redirect it to more sinister

PETER LEE
To Hell and Back: Hiroshima and Nagasaki

JEFFREY ST. CLAIR
Hand Jobs: Heidegger, Hitler and Trump

PETE DOLACK
Millions for the Boss, Cuts for You!

MARTHA ROSENBERG – RONNIE CUMMINS
Bayer and Monsanto: a Marriage Made in Hell

KARL GROSSMAN
Long Island as a Nuclear Park

BINOY KAMPMARK
Sweden's Assange Problem: The District Court Ruling

ROBERT FISK
Why the US Dropped Its Demand That Assad Must Go

BRIAN CLOUGHLEY
Pivoting to War

STAVROS MAVROUDEAS
Blatant Hypocrisy: the Latest Late-Night Bailout of Greece

ARUN GUPT

ends. Here a heretofore undiscussed facet of this development will be broached (a guiding feature informing the subtext of Duginism's 'beyond left and right' ideological catchall); and, that is, the Duginist appropriation of a primarily western occultist framework (and specifically the worldview of Chaos magic) and its transformation by the Duginists into a strategy for political action in the service of the Fascist Internationale.

Whither Dugin's Traditionalism?

Many discussions around Alexander Dugin in print have outlined his vast, often contradictory, influences, background and ideological trajectory. For example, Dugin's 'Traditionalism' or 'neo-Traditionalism' – i.e. his adherence to the ideas of French Sufi Muslim convert *René Guénon (d. 1951)* and the Italian Julius Evola (d. 1974) – has been detailed by Mark Sedgwick and others (see, for instance, Sedgwick's Against the Modern World, 2004: chapter 12). However, at least in more recent years, Dugin's Traditionalism appears to be overstated, since his fanatical (almost messianic) Heideggerianism – face to face with the dismissive, often overtly hostile, views held by many eminent figures of the Traditionalist school towards Martin Heidegger – has seemingly placed him outside of the proverbial neo-Traditionalist pale. Comments made in an early

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NPR, Yemen & the Downplaying of U.S. War Crimes

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Are We Witnessing the Beginning of the End of Globalization?

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The Old Braceros Fight On

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LAWRENCE REICHARD
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PETER BERL

chapter of his 2014 book, '*Martin Heidegger: The Philosophy of Another Beginning*' (2014: 18), where Heidegger has been elevated by Dugin to the status of a culminating eschatological figure on par with the prophet of Islam, only reinforces such negatively held views about Dugin's 'anti-Traditionalism' among some contemporary neo-Traditionalists.

As such Alexander Dugin's purported Traditionalism, which used to serve at one point as his biographical headliner, is no longer a reliable feature which can be taken uncritically and at face value. If he once was, as of now at least, Dugin is no longer a neo-Traditionalist in any meaningful sense, which makes the use and appropriation of the term by North American white nationalist acolytes of Dugin, such as Matthew Heimbach, hold even less validity. Therefore, to continue discussing Dugin's current ideas and stances in light of *Guénonian-Evolian* Traditionalism can in fact be misleading because he has in recent times moved in the opposite direction and into what some neo-Traditionalists would probably characterize as 'counter-initiatic currents' and the 'Counter-Tradition'.

Chaos Magic as the True Duginist *weltanschauung*

The misanthropic ideas of British occultist and satanist Aleister

Bernie and Utopia

STAN COX – PAUL COX
Indonesia's Unnatural Mud Disaster Turns Ten

LINDA PENTZ GUNTER
Obama in Hiroshima: Time to Say "Sorry" and "Ban the Bomb"

GEORGE SOUVLIS
How the West Came to Rule: an Interview with Alexander Anievas

DAVE LINDORFF
With Clinton's Nixonian Email Scandal Deepening, Sandes Must Demand Answers

DMITRY MICKIEWICZ
Barbarous Deforestation in Western Ukraine

GILBERT MERCIER
Donald Trump: Caligula of the Lowest Common Denominator Empire?

PATRICK BOND
Imperialism's Junior Partners

MARK HAND
The Trouble with Fracking Fiction

Crowley (d. 1947) do however inform both the Duginist world view and its contemporary praxis. Indeed it is within the worldview of Chaos magic specifically (which is a spawn of Crowley's Thelemic philosophy) where much of the paradoxes and seeming contradictions of the Duginist *weltanschauung* – and especially in its Fourth Positionist catchall of 'beyond right or left' – must be sought, since this is (whether explicitly articulated or not) the actual animating locus of the Duginist far-right praxis, beginning with its choice of symbology, i.e. his Eurasian flag of eight white or yellow thunderbolts (or arrows) shaped in a radial pattern and set behind a black background. This symbol by itself is alternatively referred to in Chaos magic as the 'wheel of chaos', 'the symbol of chaos', 'arms of chaos', 'the arrows of chaos', 'the chaos star', 'the chaos cross', 'the chaosphere' or 'the symbol of eight'. Somewhat reminiscent of the Thule Society and then Hitler's own appropriation of the swastika from the writings of Theosophical Society founder H.P. Blavatsky (d. 1891), Dugin derives his design from the popularizations of it made by western Chaos magicians during the 1970s-1980s who themselves appropriated it from the work of British science fiction and fantasy novelist Michael Moorcock.

It should be noted here that both the number eight as well as the color black play a pivotal role in all neo-Nazi/far-right symbology,

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On President Obama's Hiroshima Visit

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May 26, 2016

PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS
The Looting Capitalism:

not to mention that the 'wheel of chaos' itself maintains striking similarities to the well known 'sun wheel' symbol used by the SS and many contemporary neo-Nazis (likewise the symbol of the old Spanish Falangists). In his own defence, Dugin would probably assert that the number eight also holds important correspondences within esoteric Christianity as well where it refers to Christ. However, his obvious (or dubious, rather) choice of the 'wheel of chaos' over the cross would tend to refute that claim. In addition, as a self-proclaimed Russian nationalist, it is not clear exactly why Alexander Dugin would choose his chief symbol from sources located within the tradition of British occultism rather than from those of his native Russia or, for that matter, from the Eastern Orthodox Christianity that he claims to adhere to. This point alone, we believe, further reinforces the allegations regarding Dugin's anti-traditionalism, while simultaneously locating him in a very different universe altogether than the one he claims to be speaking for.

Be that as it may, such behaviour in itself would be quite consistent with Chaos magic's basic dictum regarding the malleability of all beliefs and their pliability as tools in the hands of the Chaos magician. Here it is the Nietzschean 'will to power' in-itself that becomes the prime motivation of the black magus turned political

Assault on the IMF

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activist. Emerging from this, the next significant formula of Chaos magic is that of a continual paradigm shift or the constant arbitrary changing of beliefs, where holding contradictory positions simultaneously becomes the vehicle for self-realization and understanding of the *coincidentia oppositorum* underlying all phenomena. As a spiritual practice there are numerous correlations and comparisons that can be made with this specific idea among many traditions around the globe (i.e. Taoist, Sufi, Tantric, Zen, Hermeticism, etc.), and in and of itself it is neutral. Except that with Dugin and his acolytes the issue is not linked specifically to any spiritual practice and its realization *per se* but rather it is purely about political *praxis* and the will to power in its crudest form. In other words, for Dugin the alchemical laboratory and its *ars operativa* resides not in the self but rather in the greater world and the theatre of politics where the black magus acts to immanentize the eschaton and where this eschaton represents the inversion of all values.

The Philosopher's Stone for Dugin is thus power over the world for its own sake and not over the self. This, including other features of his thinking, is what informs the paradigmatic 'beyond left and right' catchall latched on to by the Duginists. It is also what makes Duginism particularly dangerous as an ideology and a movement. In

other words, in this worldview where Chaos magic acts as the ideological *primum mobile*, occultist principles are made to serve a fundamentally fascist political program. Some would also call this a form of Satanism and yet another manifestation of the very modernity and 'materialist West' that Alexander Dugin has otherwise railed against. Arguably, and whatever else Dugin says to criticize and distance himself from it, Hitlerian National Socialism attempted precisely the very same thing – animated also, as it was, by almost identical underlying ideological concerns and motivations.

That said, René Guénon alleged about Blavatsky and her Theosophical Society that during the nineteenth and early twentieth century they were essentially acting in the capacity of a colonialist trojan horse put up by the imperial British secret services in order to infiltrate and disrupt the traditional religious sub-cultures of the sub-continent (see his, *Theosophy: The History of a Pseudo-Religion*, 2004). Given Dugin's networks in Iran, Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere in the Islamic world, not to mention Eastern Europe, it is not entirely out of the realm of possibility that similar patterns and inducements may be motivating and underlying the Duginists' recruitment agenda whereby Dugin himself can be seen as the new Blavatsky with his networks the successor to the Theosophical Society-cum-British imperial trojan horse. Certainly their attempt to

further break down the already fractured left/right spectrum in Europe in order to recruit for the far-right appears to speak to it directly given that their unambiguous racist and reactionary rhetoric on the immigration/refugee crisis, on the face of things, otherwise defies the alliances they have made inside the Islamic world among Iranians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Syrians and other sectors of the Resistance Axis.

Russia, the European refugee crisis and far-right Duginist geopolitics in action

Now, the instrumental role of NATO in the collapse of the Libyan state in 2011; the Syrian war that is now going into its fifth year; ISIS; Ukraine, and, above all, the European refugee crisis appears to have provided the Duginists a rare opportunity to exploit existing splits arising among cross-sections of the western antiwar Left as well as among activists in the Muslim community itself in order to recruit among these groups. This is especially in evidence in the recent talking points adopted by a number of otherwise progressive and left-leaning pundits who regularly appear on RT (Russia Today) and elsewhere in the alternative media where their usually consistent antiwar stance with regard to Syria specifically (and western imperialism generally) has, in paradoxical fashion, given way instead

to a melange of reactionary narratives over the European refugee crisis. In short, we have a situation where certain progressives (and even some Muslims) have adopted the contemporary white supremacist *kulturkampf* rhetoric of fascists and fellow travellers that largely victimizes Mid East/North African immigrants and asylum seekers in Europe, and where rightwing hysteria over a perceived threat to 'European culture' and 'its way of life' is uncritically repeated, to varying degrees, parrot fashion.

Whereas some blame Russian state policy directly for such recent developments, the point of view of the present author is that such a turn of events ultimately benefits the agendas of Empire itself rather than Russia specifically such that these Duginists may in fact be sheepdogging for long-term Anglo-American Atlanticist policy initiatives rather than specifically Russian ones. Be that as it may, rumours abound that the Russian state has been a generous donor (and in a few cases has even outright financed for protracted periods) fascist/far-right groups such as Jobbik in Hungary and the Golden Dawn in Greece. Since 2014 in Germany, for instance, the AfD (*Alternative für Deutschland*), the NPD (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) and PEGIDA are alleged to have received substantial financial support from Moscow as a means of destabilizing Merkel and the German center who were key actors in

the sanctions imposed on Russia following its annexation of Crimea in March 2014. Similarly is held regarding Le Pen's *Front National* in France. Certainly much of the anti-immigration/anti-refugee jingoism published regularly on the pages of RT (Russia Today) as of that time would on the face of things tend to support the allegations.

However, even with that, it is not clear exactly how such policies would strategically benefit Putin's Russia in the long term either, since these very same forces that Russia ostensibly supports at the moment could quite easily be marshalled at any given point in the future by its Anglo-American geopolitical rival and used against Russia itself, as the case of Ukraine amply demonstrates. Certainly it can be argued that Russia and the Anglo-American Atlanticists are using competing far-right proxies against each other's interests on the continent as a form of asymmetrical warfare, with Germany as one of the key battlegrounds and the refugee issue as the linchpin. But then this would tend to indicate some kind of split in the Fascist Internationale while also explaining one reason for the aggressive recruitment efforts presently undertaken by the Duginists (especially among Muslims and disenchanted Leftists without a home) on social media and elsewhere. Nevertheless in Greece, for instance, it was not with the Golden Dawn but with Syriza that Dugin personally invested the most time, and Syriza's role during 2015 in further fracturing

consensus among the Anglo-European Left has undeniably been a critical one.

Much more can be said, but whatever rhetoric the Duginists spin among assorted activist communities to draw them in, on its own merits Duginism is neither authentically anti-imperialist nor does it genuinely hold any leftwing values. Nor, for that matter, is it Traditionalism either. Rather, on all fronts Duginism actually represents a carefully smokescreened form of fascist white separatism, which is to say yet another ideological permutation of Euro-American white supremacy that has organized itself into a movement. Dugin's own skewed definition of Eurasia, where in this scheme Eurasia merely represents the horizontal landmass between Vladivostok and Lisbon (and where all of south-west and south-east Asia are categorically excluded from it), reinforces the fact. As such the seductive dangers represented by Duginism and its networks to any united front against Empire among the anti-imperialist Left and anti-Salafist Muslims cannot be underestimated.

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